

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** claim 20 and 30.

Please **CANCEL** claims 39 and 40.

No new matter has been entered. A copy of all pending claims and a status of each claim are provided below.

Listing of Claims

1-19 (cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) A surgical scalpel comprising:

a housing having an internal channel and a viewing window formed therein; and

a blade carrier slidably disposed in said channel for movement between a retracted position and an extended position, said blade carrier including a single use indicator that is visible through said viewing window when said blade carrier is in said retracted position and is structurally altered when said blade carrier is moved to said extended position wherein said blade carrier includes an actuator/locking fin that, when advanced, simultaneously advances a surgical blade, resulting in the single use indicator that is one of irreversibly collapsed and inverted by contact with a plurality of ribbed interior wall surfaces.

21. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 20 wherein said single use indicator is a flexible convex element that is irreversibly collapsed when said blade carrier is moved to said extended position.

22. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 20 wherein a portion of said blade carrier is tapered to form a shimming plane that contacts an interior wall surface of said internal channel when said blade carrier is in said extended position.

23. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 22 further comprising one or more tapered ribs formed on said interior wall surface.

24. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 20 wherein said housing includes a slot formed therein and said blade carrier includes an actuator/locking fin that extends through said slot.

25. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 24 wherein said slot includes a ramp formed therein for engaging said actuator/locking fin when said blade carrier is in said extended position.

26. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 20 wherein said blade carrier includes a leaf spring extending outwardly therefrom, said leaf spring having a distal end that engages said housing.

27. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 20 further comprising a palm support removably attached to said housing.

28. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 20 further comprising a plurality of raised ribs formed on an exterior surface of said housing.

29. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 20 wherein said housing is a molded plastic housing of unitary construct.

30. (Currently amended) A surgical scalpel comprising:

a housing having an internal channel and a viewing window formed therein;

a blade carrier slidably disposed in said channel for movement between a retracted position and an extended position, said blade carrier having a first end adapted to engage a surgical blade and a leaf spring extending from a second end thereof, said leaf spring having a distal end that engages said housing, said blade carrier further including a single use indicator that is visible through said viewing window when said blade carrier is in said retracted position and is structurally altered when said blade carrier is moved to said extended position wherein said blade carrier includes an actuator/locking fin that, when advanced, simultaneously advances the surgical blade, resulting in the single use indicator that is one of irreversibly collapsed and inverted by contact with a plurality of ribbed interior wall surfaces; and

a surgical blade attached to said first end of said blade carrier.

31. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 30 wherein said single use indicator is a flexible convex element that is irreversibly collapsed when said blade carrier is moved to said extended position.

32. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 30 wherein a portion of said blade carrier is tapered to form a shimming plane that contacts an interior wall surface of said internal channel when said blade carrier is in said extended position.

33. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 32 further comprising one or more tapered ribs formed on said interior wall surface.

34. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 30 wherein said housing includes a slot formed therein and said blade carrier includes an actuator/locking fin that extends through said slot.

35. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 34 wherein said slot includes a ramp formed therein for engaging said actuator/locking fin when said blade carrier is in said extended position.

36. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 30 further comprising a palm support removably attached to said housing.

37. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 30 further comprising a plurality of raised ribs formed on an exterior surface of said housing.

38. (Previously presented) The surgical scalpel of claim 30 wherein said housing is a molded plastic housing of unitary construct.

39. (Canceled)

40. (Canceled)